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ACTION EAP-00

RELEASED IN FULL

INFO	LOG-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00	UTED-00	VC-00	H-01
	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00
	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00
	SP-00	SS-00	TEST-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	PMB-00
	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00	/007W			

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R 152022Z JUL 02
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6748
INFO NSC WASHDC
USCINCSO MIAMI FL
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

UNCLAS CARACAS 002034

USCINCSO ALSO FOR POLAD
NSC FOR SALCEDO

E.O. 12958: NA
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, VE
SUBJECT: POLITICAL UPDATE: JULY 15, 2002

1. SUMMARY: BUSINESSMAN RICHARD BOULTON WAS RELEASED BY THE UNITED SELF-DEFENSE FORCES OF COLOMBIA (AUC) AFTER BEING HELD CAPTIVE EXACTLY TWO YEARS FROM JULY 15, 2000. VICE PRESIDENT RANGEL ANNOUNCED THE NEED FOR REORGANIZING THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE. ON JULY 15, CTV ANNOUNCED
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THAT THE DECISION TO HOLD A NATIONAL CIVIC STRIKE WOULD BE GIVEN IN FIFTEEN DAYS. NEWS OF MORE POLITICAL REORGANIZATION CAME FROM INTERIOR MINISTER DIOSDADO CABELLO, WHO DECLARED INITIATING A CAMPAIGN TO REARRANGE THE POLITICAL PARTIES INCLUDING THE MVR.
END SUMMARY

AUC RELEASES BUSINESSMAN RICHARD BOULTON

2. ON JULY 15, THE UNITED SELF-DEFENSE FORCES OF COLOMBIA (AUC) RELEASED RICHARD BOULTON AFTER BEING HELD CAPTIVE TWO YEARS. ACCORDING TO THE COLOMBIAN PRESS, THE AUC RELEASED BOULTON AT A RED CROSS STATION IN COLOMBIA. BOULTON WILL UNDERGO MEDICAL EXAMS AND IS EXPECTED TO ARRIVE IN BOGOTA WITHIN A COUPLE OF

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DAYS. BOULTON'S WIFE AND MOTHER ARE CURRENTLY IN BOGOTA WORKING WITH THE VENEZUELAN EMBASSY TO ENSURE BOULTON'S SAFE RETURN TO VENEZUELA.

RANGEL SEES NEED TO DIALOGUE

3. VP JOSE VICENTE RANGEL ANNOUNCED ON JULY 12 THE REFORMULATION OF THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, RANGEL'S STATEMENT REPRESENTS THE GOV'S RECOGNITION OF THE OPPOSITION'S GROWING POLITICAL POSITION. RANGEL ADMITTED THAT JULY 11 PROVED CLEARLY THE NEED FOR CHAVEZ TO DIRECTLY CONFRONT BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PRESSURES.

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CTV WILL DECIDE ON STRIKE IN FIFTEEN DAYS

4. ON JULY 15, THE CONFEDERATION OF VENEZUELAN WORKERS (CTV) WILL HAVE FIFTEEN DAYS TO DISCUSS ANY PLANS FOR A NATIONAL CIVIC STRIKE. THIS IS IN RESPONSE TO CTV'S CARLOS ORTEGA'S JULY 11 STATEMENT CALLING FOR A NATIONAL STRIKE DUE UNEMPLOYMENT, THE MISUSE OF FIEM AND LACK OF A SOCIAL SECURITY POLICY. CTV AND THE DEMOCRATIC COORDINATION COMMISSION ARE MEETING ON JULY 15 TO ENSURE ALL MEASURES ARE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION BEFORE INITIATING A NATIONAL CIVIC STRIKE.

MINISTER CABELLO PLANS TO RESTRUCTURIZE THE MVR

5. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, MINISTER OF INTERIOR CABELLO DECLARED A CAMPAIGN TO SHUFFLE BOTH ELECTED AND POLITICAL POSITIONS, INCLUDING THE CURRENT ADMINISTRATIONS' POLITICAL PARTY, THE FIFTH REPUBLIC MOVEMENT (MVR). MINISTER CABELLO, WHO IS ACTING COORDINATOR FOR THE MVR, IS SEEKING A REFERENDUM FOR ALL ELECTED AND POLITICAL POSITIONS. CABELLO ALSO MENTIONED THE POSSIBLE REMOVAL OF THE MAYOR OF CARACAS, ALFREDO PENA, AS PART OF THE RENOVATION STRATEGY.

6. PENA, A FORMER CHAVEZ MINISTER IS NOW AN OUTSPOKEN CRITIC OF THE PRESIDENT. IN WHAT MAY BE A STEP BACKWARDS FOR WORKING LEVEL COMMUNICATION, LIBERATOR MAYOR FREDDY BERNAL WAS NAMED HEAD OF THE "BOLIVARIAN ASSOCIATION OF MAYORS." VP RANGEL AND FOREIGN MINISTER CHADERTON PRESIDED OVER THE CEREMONY (WE HAVE NO IDEA WHY THE FOREIGN MINISTER ATTENDED THIS CEREMONY). THERE

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ARE ABOUT 335 MAYORS IN VENEZUELA, OF WHOM SOMETHING UNDER 100
ARE CONSIDERED "OFICIALISTAS." MEANWHILE, THE ASSOCIATION OF
MAYORS, THE ORIGINAL GROUP, IS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CHAVEZ
THIS WEEK.

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